

*John Campbell
11/1/62*

A PAPER
CONTAINING
A STATEMENT AND VINDICATION
OF
CERTAIN POLITICAL OPINIONS.

Read before the Democratic Association,
CHESTNUT HILL, NOV. 1862.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS paper is meant for my neighbours and personal friends. It may, in the excitement of these times, have a wider interest than I now anticipate, and possibly be read by many of my fellow-citizens of Pennsylvania. Should it provoke hostile criticism, let it at least be understood as telling the truth as I most sincerely believe it to be.

PHILADELPHIA, November, 1862.

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WITH a strong sense of the duty of reserve in times of great public excitement, and the consciousness that a private citizen's conduct and opinions are of no interest beyond a very limited circle, I venture to make a personal appeal within that circle.

I am glad of the chance of speaking to my personal friends, and think it a duty, to my character and to my family, to put in a distinct and permanent form a brief and perfectly candid statement of my conduct and opinions in relation to the troubles of the country. If the irrationalism of the hour should soon or ever pass by, and law and good order, as guaranteed by the Constitution, and a healthy public opinion be restored, this paper may serve as a private memorial of feelings and opinions of which my friends will have no reason to be ashamed. If not, and our doom of ruin be realized, it will be of little moment what I or any one else now think or say.

As this justification (if I may so describe it) is strictly personal, no apology is needed—certainly none to those who are interested from familiar and social relations—for referring briefly to the past.

Born and educated in Pennsylvania, my whole active life, excepting brief periods of absence in the public service, has been passed here. I have no private interests or family connections within the limits of the Confederate States. Time and distance, and latterly the quick corrosion of civil war, have so completely worn away the few links which once bound me to

Southern friends, that I dare call them so no longer. I have never, though a wide traveller elsewhere, crossed the border except once, thirteen years ago, on a professional errand to Norfolk and Richmond. I have no correspondent in the South, and have, since the beginning of the war, neither written nor received a letter to or from any individual there, except one, to which special reference shall hereafter be made. The sentiment of local affection and State pride, which is now made matter of reproach to those who think as I do, is not a new one with me; and no man can point to any act or opinion of my life, public or private, inconsistent with this sense of duty.

Returning from abroad in the spring of 1859, I took relatively little part in the Presidential canvass of the next year, though feeling a deep interest, for I saw in the future, as clearly as I see in the ghastly present, that the triumph of the "Republican" party, with its aggressive doctrines and the radical and fanatical spirit which animated it, threatened the disruption and downfall of the Republic itself. The Chicago platform embodied a principle of revolution that has borne bloody fruits. There are those near and dear to me who know, what few out of my family suspected, that a secret fear—a fixed presentiment—of the misery to come, overshadowed my mind as early as October, 1860, when the State elections so surely foretold the Presidential catastrophe of a month later. I thought then that Mr. Lincoln's election would endanger Southern rights and interests and that the South was in earnest. I hoped sincerely I might be mistaken. It turns out I was not.

In the anxious interval from the election to the inauguration, I was in no position to tempt me to action, or which authorized me to intrude my opinions on any one. According to my judgment, the President tried to do his duty faithfully. No advocate of a coercive policy can fairly blame him. He asked of Congress the means of defending the public property, and it refused to confer the powers which *then* everybody thought Congress only could authorize or delegate. The idea that any necessity could create or confer Executive power was held by

no one. His reward has been denunciation on all sides,—generally denunciation without knowledge or inquiry. His consolation must be that he shed no drop of blood, and violated neither the written word nor the animating spirit of the Constitution. By Mr. Buchanan, I never was consulted; and to him, in that interval, I never offered counsel. I wrote more than once to the Secretary of State, Mr. Black, and to the Attorney-General, Mr. Stanton, receiving replies in most instances to my letters; and this correspondence, should it ever see the light, will abundantly prove my fidelity to the Union, and the thorough sympathy then existing between us.

On the 17th of January, 1861, I took part in a town meeting at the National Hall in this city, at which a number of my most distinguished fellow-citizens spoke. Our object was to dissuade and oppose military coercion, and the inauguration of civil war by the act of the Federal Government; and never was there greater enthusiasm or unanimity manifested than on that occasion. There was perfect accord throughout. I did not prepare the Resolutions, though they were altered, and, as I then thought, amended by me. One, however, which has attracted much adverse criticism, was exclusively, in its origin, mine. It embodied my opinions when danger of disruption was at a distance. It expresses my opinions now, when it is a hideous reality. It was adopted with enthusiastic unanimity, and is in these words:

"Resolved, That in the deliberate judgment of the Democracy of Philadelphia, and, so far as we know it, of Pennsylvania, the dissolution of the Union, by the separation of the whole South,—a result we shall most sincerely deplore,—may release this Commonwealth from the bonds which now connect it with the confederacy, and would authorize and require its citizens, through a convention to be assembled for that purpose, to determine with whom their lot shall be cast; whether with the North and East, whose fanaticism has precipitated this misery upon us, or with our brethren of the South, whose wrongs we feel as our own, or whether Pennsylvania shall stand by herself, ready, when occasion offers, to bind together

the broken Union, and resume her place of loyalty and devotion."

If the doctrine of this resolution,—if the assertion in clear terms of a local sentiment, and confidence that it alone can avail to protect us in the event of permanent dissolution,—if this be treason, then was I, and the thousands who cheered and voted for that resolution, guilty. It stated a proposition, which I hardly think can be disputed, that the separation, once accomplished, of the whole South, or the whole North, or the whole West, or the whole East, would radically affect the relations of the remaining States. It would dislocate them all. It would affect them as to debt, as to taxation, as to representation, as to foreign nations. Federal relations, thus impaired, are practically Federal relations no longer; and each State, without any act of its own, but literally by the force of circumstances, would be "released," and, being released, falls back on its own sovereignty. The resolution asserted this, and no more; and the time will come when it will be accepted as truth. I take the responsibility, if it involves censure, of having enunciated it.

From that day to this, I have never attended a political meeting or opened my lips in public.

From Mr. Lincoln's inauguration to the breaking out of hostilities, I was among those who silently hoped against hope. It was hard work to struggle against the discouragements of those days. The Peace Congress, which Pennsylvania, had she not been swayed by passion, might have influenced for good, had passed away. The Crittenden compromise was rejected. The Cotton States, one by one, with a solemnity which should have been impressive, had declared themselves out of the Union; and the Republican party prepared to take possession of what was left of Federal authority. The snatches of speeches made by Mr. Lincoln, as he travelled from his home to the seat of government, enlightened nobody. The misty dreariness of the Inaugural depressed every one; and thoughtful men, at home and abroad, stood around, like the puzzled questioners of the Oracle, wondering what it really meant. The Cabinet was framed on

a purely sectional basis, with a controlling influence of extreme men. No selection was made from the border States, then as truly "loyal" as were New York and Ohio and Pennsylvania and Indiana. Whether there was any foundation for the rumour that Mr. Lincoln intimated a willingness to call a citizen of Virginia (Mr. Scott) to his Cabinet I know not; but I do know that that citizen, a steady, resolute Union man, now lies in his bloody grave at the foot of the Blue Ridge, murdered by one of Mr. Lincoln's German soldiers.* So with the diplomatic appointments. All were given to one section,—or, if an exception to this occurred, it was that of some abolition Pariah from a slave State. Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee, in the distribution of this high patronage, were treated as if they had seceded, or could furnish no citizen fit to be trusted. With what seems to have been characteristic fatuity, political proscription was scornfully brandished in the face of the doubtful States. Mr. Seward long ago boasted that, with his consent, none but anti-slavery men should represent this country abroad,—and, for once, he kept his word. Mr. Giddings was sent as Consul-General to Quebec!

Then, in the months of March and April, 1861, came the interlude, if the word can be so applied, of the negotiations as to Fort Sumter, between the Confederate Commissioners and Mr. Seward. And on this point I feel authorized so far to interrupt my personal narrative as to adduce some unpublished testimony, if for no other reason, in order to do justice to a distant friend. I have said that since these troubles began, I have had, with a single exception, no correspondent within

* "The Hon. Robert E. Scott, of Fauquier county, Va., was killed on Saturday, at Frank Smith's, near Greenwich, Fauquier county, Va. A couple of Geary's or Blenker's men, supposed to be deserters, having committed many depredations through the county, Robert E. Scott, with Winter Payne and others (some ten or twelve), made an attempt to capture them at Smith's. In approaching the house, Mr. Scott and his overseer (Dulany) were shot dead by the deserters. The others ran, and Scott's double-barrel gun was afterwards broken over him by the villains. Their remains were brought to Warrenton on Saturday, with Mr. Scott's gun. The deserters escaped."—*Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 8, 1862.

the limits of the Confederate States. This exception is the Honourable John A. Campbell, of Alabama, formerly a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, whom I hope there is no offence in describing as an eminent jurist, a sound Union man till the policy of the Administration rendered Unionism in the South impossible, and a Christian gentleman. To him, having been honoured by his friendship previously, I wrote, urging him to retain his place in the Federal judiciary. On the 5th of June, 1861, he answered my letter, and thus referred to his own patriotic agency in a last and ineffectual effort to keep the peace :

"I suppose you must have seen my letters to Governor Seward in some of the Northern papers. There are some facts connected with them that I am glad to have an opportunity to communicate to you. When I visited Governor Seward, I had not had any communication with General Davis, or any member of the Executive Department of the Montgomery government. The first knowledge I had of the demand of the Commissioners for recognition, or of Mr. Seward's embarrassment, was derived from Judge Nelson and Mr. Seward. I offered to write to General Davis and ask him to restrain his commissioners. I supposed that Mr. Seward desired to prevent the irritation and complaint that would naturally follow from the rejection of the Commissioners in the South, and the reaction that their expression (*sic*) would have at the North. He informed me that Sumter was to be evacuated, and that Mr. Weed said, 'This was a sharp and bitter pang, which he' (Weed) 'was anxious might be spared to them.' Mr. Seward authorized me to communicate the fact of the evacuation to Mr. Davis, and the precise object was to induce him to render his commissioners inactive. I did not anticipate having any other interview with Mr. Seward. I supposed that Sumter would be evacuated in the course of a very few days, and without any other action on my part. When upon the second and third interviews with him I found there was to be delay, I conversed with Judge Nelson as to the delicacy of my position, and it was at his suggestion and by his counsel that I agreed

to be the 'intermediary' until Sumter was evacuated. Neither of us doubted that the fort was to be surrendered or abandoned. The first notice of any other disposition was communicated on the 10th April. Colonel Lamon, the present Marshal of the District of Columbia, came to Washington with the family of Mr. Lincoln, I believe. He was with him at Washington in some familiar capacity. He visited Charleston in March, obtained access to Sumter, and left the impression on the mind of Governor Pickens that he was the agent of the Government, engaged in making arrangements for its evacuation. In the latter part of March, Governor Pickens sent a telegram to ascertain what had become of Lamon. I bore this to Mr. Seward, and he promised to inquire concerning him. His answer was that the President was concerned at any misconception of Lamon's words or visit, and desired me to converse with him; that Lamon did not visit Charleston for him, and was not commissioned to make any pledge or assurance to bind him. Mr. Seward said Lamon would be at the State Department for me to interrogate him. I declined to converse with Lamon; and recommended that he (Lamon) should himself write to Governor Pickens to explain the matter. I asked Governor Seward about the evacuation of the fort. Without any verbal reply, he wrote:—'The President may desire to supply Sumter, but will not do so without giving notice to Governor Pickens.' Upon reading this, I asked if the President had any design to attempt a supply of Sumter. His reply contained an observation of the President. That I pass; but he said he did not believe any attempt would be made to supply Sumter, and there was no design to reinforce it. I told him if that were the case, I should not employ this language,—that it would be interpreted as a design to attempt a supply, and that, if such a thing were believed in Charleston, they would bombard the fort,—that they did not regard the surrender of Sumter as open to question, and, when they did, they would proceed to extremities. He left the State Department, I remaining there till his return; and, on his return, he wrote these words:—'(I am satisfied that) the Government will

not undertake to supply Sumter without giving notice to Governor Pickens.' This excluded the matter of desire, and, with what had taken place, left the impression that if any attempt were made it would be an open, declared, and peaceful offer to supply the fort, which being resisted by the Carolinians, the fort would be abandoned as a military necessity and to spare the effusion of blood,—the odium of resistance and of the evacuation being thrown upon the late Administration and the Confederate States. Had these counsels prevailed,—had the policy been marked with candour and moderation,—I am not sure that even before this the fruit might have been seen ripening among the States in renewed relations of kindness and good will, to be followed ere long by a suitable political and civil union, adequate to the security of both sections at home and abroad. The ideas of union and a common country, as applied to all the States, are *now* simply obsolete."

This simple and precise narrative, introduced here as having been addressed to me, is, in the light of what has occurred since, a sad revelation, which needs no comment. Neither at home nor abroad does the Administration seem to have known that the best policy is fair play. I answered Judge Campbell's letter soon after its receipt, and, as evidence of my feelings and opinions then, I make an extract from my letter. "You speak of the united and resolute feeling at the South. Here it is very nearly as unanimous, and I can discern no signs of reaction. There are (I speak of this city) a few gentlemen who hold, as I do, to the doctrine of recognition and peace, but it would do neither us nor you any good to say so. There is a local sentiment which it is not graceful or proper to defy, and minorities must sometimes be silent. What is most painful is to be made conscious of the insensibility of those around me to the fearful infractions of the Constitution and conceded law which are daily occurring. Professors of elementary law teach their students that the President may suspend the habeas corpus act. Learned and hitherto patriotic men, admitting the acts of the President to be wrong, justify the out-

rages on the ground of State necessity. This is worse than the other; and this it is which alarms me as a Northern man and one whose lot must be in the North. While, according to Mr. Russell, the South Carolina gentlemen want an old-fashioned monarchy, we, without talking about it, are sliding down into something quite as bad."

So I wrote a year ago; and there has been a fearful decadence since. I received from Judge Campbell another long and interesting letter, dated at Warrenton, Virginia, July 27th, five days after the Federal defeat at Manassas, from which I extract a few lines, on which I need make no remark. "The battle-ground of Manassas," he wrote, "is near me, and, both before and since the battle, I have been upon it. I came on the field early on Monday morning, before sunrise. I carried with me water, ice, food, and medicines, to alleviate whatever suffering I could find. I found there wounded soldiers from New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and New York, in numbers, who had received no attention. I was told of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Connecticut men elsewhere." To this letter I replied in a few lines, there being no interdict of friendly correspondence; but my letter never reached Judge Campbell, having come into the possession of the Federal Postmaster at Philadelphia, who carried it to Washington, where the seal was broken and the letter read. This piece of gratuitous infamy was at the time made matter of boasting by the individual who perpetrated it. Had one word to or from me offensive to the authorities at Washington been found in this or any other manipulated letter, I presume the supervision would have been still more boldly avowed and justified. As it is, it constitutes an element in the long list of petty and unnecessary outrages of which the police-agents of the Federal Government have been guilty.

With the exception of my correspondence with Judge Campbell, every word of which is at the service of the Government, I have neither written nor received a letter to or from any human being in the Confederate States.

On the 15th of April, 1861, the news of the fall of Fort

Sumter reached Philadelphia. The excitement, though great, was not such as the political adherents of the Administration desired, and, in order to promote it, what was called a "loyal" mob was organized, and for two days paraded our streets, visiting the houses of those whom it pleased to suspect, and exacting some absurd profession of sympathy from the inmates. This mob was not dangerous, only because it was contemptible. My house was visited during my absence in court, and I knew nothing of the danger to my family—if there were any—till it was over. A negro servant who had accompanied me to China happened to recollect that a flag was stowed away in the house, and, on his displaying it, the ruffians who had tried to frighten my wife and little children dispersed. I should hardly have referred to this miserable attempt at popular disturbance, had not leading members of the Republican party, stipendiaries of the Government, very recently in public expressed their approval of what was then done, and advised its repetition. I have always regarded this outrage on my home with deep and yet contemptuous resentment, and was willing to attribute it to the agency of misguided and irresponsible men. Now that it has been thus endorsed, I desire to be understood as concentrating and intensifying upon those who approve it the feeling which I have, I hope, intelligibly described. No one with the instincts of gentlemen would have approved of it.

Since that time fifteen months have elapsed, during which there has been a persistent attempt, never for a moment intermitted, to direct popular prejudice against me. I have neither time nor inclination (for it is a most painful retrospect) to refer to it, except in this general way. Were the crisis less momentous, or the perils involved less alarming, one might smile at the grotesque variations which my personal and political enemies have played on the one strain of calumny of my conduct, my motives, my opinions. Not a week, certainly not a fortnight, has passed, without my name being printed in prominent type in connection with every species of disparaging imputation, and I have been compelled to see foolish and credulous readers believing, willingly or reluctantly, these

allegations. I have been accused of having correspondence with the Confederate government, or individuals in the Confederate States; of writing to my friends abroad in favour of intervention; of planning treason when alone, or in conjunction with other gentlemen, whose names are occasionally introduced to relieve the monotony of spite; of directing the action of the Democratic party, to which I am proud to belong, but which, in its rising power and increasing energy, needs no guidance of mine; in short, of exercising all the faculties of a mind fertile of mischief to the injury of my country and my State. Little do the men who scatter these venomous slanders care how deeply they wound the helpless and the innocent,—how they disturb family and social relations, and embitter the poor residuum of kind feeling which civil strife permits to exist. They cater to the prevalent prejudice of the hour. They fling their share of detraction, and are content. The graves of the dead, of those very dear to me, are not sacred; and I have had the feelings of members of my family outraged by insults to the memory of those we love in common. The writer of a pamphlet, (for I have had elaborate pamphlets printed about me,) a person whom to my knowledge I have never seen, and whom certainly I have never intentionally injured, dragged before the public the character of my dead brother, only to give a sting to his vituperation on me, and tried to make the widow and children of that brother think disparagingly of one whom they are willing to love and trust. There has been no remission of paltry and elaborate malignity; and I regret being obliged to say that the diseased public, even around my own home, have seemed to enjoy it. No word of reply has ever been made by me. No word of defence has been uttered for me. Persons conducting newspapers in Philadelphia who, when we meet, profess to be friendly, have either been afraid to utter one word in my justification, though they knew the accusations were false, or else have been, by jobs and contracts and offices, bought up to connive at wrong. At one time last summer (1861) it was positively announced in the telegraphic columns, then, I believe, as now, under the censorship of the Executive, that I and other well-

known gentlemen of Philadelphia had been arrested and put into a military prison—a rumour calculated to do harm in more respects than one, and to alarm distant relatives and friends and business correspondents; and yet to this hour, except in one instance, it has not been contradicted by a single Philadelphia editor. So it has been with every thing, till at last, as a natural consequence, a state of feeling has been generated, a currency of calumny created by these coiners of petty and malignant falsehood, which makes this reluctant vindication necessary.

To this torrent of defamation, of suspicion and dark imputation, I can oppose but this,—an emphatic and most conscientious denial of the truth of any one assertion about me, or the justice of any accusation against me. If I could make it more comprehensive, I should do so. If I could be sure of being able to track out each individual slander, I should be glad to stamp it with indignant or contemptuous denial. It is impossible to do this within ordinary limits. I pronounce them false, one and all, in the aggregate and in detail. I go further, and, with equal emphasis, pronounce them wilfully false. No act, or written or spoken word, can be traced to me during the dreary year which has just expired, or at any time, inconsistent with reverence for the Constitution, and implicit obedience to the law. If there could have been, I do not doubt that long ere this I should have shared the captivity of those who for more than a year have been immured, without a hearing or a responsible accuser, in the military prisons of New York and New England.

It would be affectation to pretend that acquiescence in this great injustice has not required much self-control. I have felt, however, that it was useless to contend with popular passion. It was better to endure all in silence, waiting for the sure reaction, sooner or later, when truth shall triumph, and, unless the great machinery of constitutional government be torn to pieces and we all are crushed in its ruins, the triumphant slanderers of to-day shall find a fearful and unforgiving retribution.

Desiring this exposition of my acts and feelings to be candid and complete, I desire to refer to the only exception to the self-

imposed rule of abstinence from any thing like interference in current politics, and to my actual opinions on public affairs. I am not ashamed of what I have done, or of the political faith I most religiously hold and which I now, for the first time, formally express. I rather reproach myself for having done so little. But that I have been raised by the active malignity of my enemies to the distinction which their slanders confer, my opinions would be of interest to no one. As it is, I choose, with a full sense of my responsibility, to make them known.

When Mr. Lincoln's first annual message was communicated to Congress, it was accompanied, or rather immediately preceded, by a huge volume of diplomatic correspondence, chiefly from the pen of the Secretary of State, Mr. Seward. I read it with curious expectation and with grievous disappointment. The literary execution was, in my opinion, so deplorably bad,—its political heresies so redundant,—its effect abroad, it seemed to me, so discreditable to our character for scholarship and statesmanship,—the ostentatious manner in which, in advance, it was given to the public, was so irregular, the sarcasm implied in its being printed by the English ministry and laid before Parliament so palpable, and the self-complacency in which, bound and adorned with gilding, it was presented to the Pope, as a rare specimen of American political literature, to be treasured with palimpsests and missals on the shelves of the Vatican, so exquisitely absurd,—that I could not resist the temptation to adverse criticism, and wrote and published a “Review of Mr. Seward's Diplomacy,”* prefacing it with a sentence of almost inspired eloquence from Burke,—the awful truth of which haunts me every hour and moment that I watch and mourn over my country's downfall and dishonor. My review was not meant to transgress the limits of fair lite-

* “Secretary Seward, to-day, sent to his Holiness Pius IX. the entire edition of the ‘History of the State of New York,’ consisting of thirteen quarto volumes, illustrated with coloured plates, and richly bound in turkey morocco and gold; also a copy of the ‘Diplomatic Correspondence for 1861,’ bound in like manner.”—*New York Herald*, April 12.

rary criticism, and I do not think it did. It was begun in a tone of pleasantry, excited by the grotesque rhetoric in which the Secretary indulged; though it became graver and graver as I advanced through what seemed to me the worse than errors of his foreign policy. It was printed privately, and this for the obvious reasons that such criticisms are most graceful if anonymous; and for another, which the course of the Administration in "abridging the freedom of speech" made operative,—a fear of personal inconvenience. There was throughout what I described as "a reserve prompted by considerations of personal safety." The success of this pamphlet was very great. The reluctance of timid or mercenary publishers to circulate it rather stimulated the desire to read it. It was extensively read at home and abroad, and quickly passed through two large editions,—a proof not so much of its own merit, as of the readiness of the popular mind to avail itself of free and decorous discussion of public men and public affairs, and its restlessness under the shackles which the Government was trying to impose on it. The popular heart, sick of the wretched trash which, day after day, dribbles through the columns of degraded and mercenary newspapers, turned readily and gratefully to free thought expressed in plain English. Mine, too, was the first of a series of Philadelphia essays which soon after appeared, showing that the love of liberty and law, and the talent to make it known and felt, was as active as ever, at least among my professional brethren. My little pamphlet, imperfect as it was, (and no one saw its blemishes and short-comings more plainly than its author,) led the way in what I sometimes fear was the forlorn hope of a subjugated community. It proved the truth might be safely uttered; but it did not abate the bitter animosity which had been directed against me.

In that pamphlet I used these words, which then, as now, embody my flickering hope in the dreadful crisis at which we have arrived:—"If by any method of war the Government can be restored to what it was before this fearful strife began, let us pray for the early consummation with the least possible

bloodshed, and with every merciful appliance of pardon and amnesty and reconciliation that can be devised ; and if it cannot,—if peace and separation be inevitable,—let us hope for the coming man amongst ourselves who shall have the mental and moral elevation to see the reality soonest, and not shrink from its recognition ; who will bend all the energies of a great mind (for such must be his) to let the separation be made without further convulsion or more ghastly scars.”

More than six months have rolled by since these words were written. The methods of war, developed with all the energy which money, and men, and evil passions, and individual courage supply, have been exhausted. At least a quarter of a million of Northern men (without any computation of Southern victims) have perished on the field or in the hospital, or returned mutilated to their homes. Millions of hopeless debt, national or local, have been piled up. Private fortunes are tottering on the edge of ruin ; industry is palsied, and public bankruptcy at hand. Voluntary enlistments are not stimulated by bounties ; and the tax-gatherer, and what for want of a better word I must call the press-gang, stand ready to start on their relentless errand. More than this : every day dissipates some theory of conquest or submission, widens the awful chasm that separates us from our brethren of the South, and renders more probable the stupendous shame of European intervention,—not merely recognition, but active military interposition, which at once settles the contest to our ignominy, and adds bitterness to the cup of degradation, for the surrenders we have made to avert it.*

* Mr. Seward's surrender of the right of police-search to English cruisers within ninety miles of Cuba—or, in other words, on the coast of Florida—seems to me one of the most unworthy acts of modern statesmanship. When, in 1839, Hayti made a slave trade treaty with Great Britain, she reserved her own police-control of the narrow seas. We have surrendered ours and got nothing in return. In 1817 Mr. J. Q. Adams told Mr. Wilberforce that the United States would never, and ought never, to concede this very right of search. “The first thing,” says Mr. Adams, “I said to him was, ‘No; you may as well save yourselves the trouble of making any proposals on that subject; my countrymen, I am very sure, will never assent to any such ar-

Why, then, in this agony of our republican and American faith, may not words of counsel for peace be tolerated? Why must they be crushed out as treasonable? Why should a Northern man be mobbed, and insulted, and proscribed, and imprisoned, because, with the experience of the bloody past and the prospect of the bloodier future, he speaks out in favor of peace?* There are thousands who think exactly as I do, who are timid and silent; men of families dependent or dispersed, capital endangered, industry threatened; fathers and mothers who are praying, too often, alas! in vain, for the return of their children from the battle-field and camp; there are hundreds of thousands of these, silent and anxious now, who will rejoice in ecstasy beyond control when the word of pacification is spoken and the flag of permanent truce be displayed at Washington and Richmond. I am old enough to remember the peace of 1815 and the joy it gave; but that joy was as nothing to what it will be when this sad fraternal strife is over and peace be made. It will brighten the crest of the statesman who accomplishes it.

These I frankly avow to be my wishes and opinions as to the immediate future. They aim at once at Peace; and when, without offence or disrespect, the questions are put to me whether I would give up without a struggle the Union and Government which two years ago existed, and how, if the power were mine, I would arrange the terms of recognition and separation, I now have no difficulty in answering.

In the first place, I think there has been a struggle with at most a questionable success; and if the choice be between the continuance of the war, with its attendant suffering and de-

rangement. The prejudices of my country are so immovably strong on that point that I do not believe they will ever assent.' Yet, through the agency of the Administration and a sectional majority of the Senate, we have surrendered it.

* Such social terrorism, such intolerance of opinion, as we have endured, has never before been practised in any community speaking the English language; and I have thrown into an Appendix to this paper one or two familiar examples of free speech in times of civil and foreign war which are not without interest.

moralization, certain miseries and uncertain results, and a recognition of the Southern Confederacy, I am in favor of Recognition,—of course making the abolition party responsible for this dread necessity. The blood of the Union is on them.

If it be a choice between the slow but ultimately successful conduct of the war, the subjugation of the Southern States, their tenure as mere military provinces, involving of course a radical change in the political organization of the triumphant North, so as virtually to abrogate State rights, and create a centralized domination with all the heresies of the day engrafted, and peaceable recognition, I still prefer Recognition.

To continue a war to the bitter end of mutual ruin for a mere point of honour, or from temper, is mischievously absurd. The moment a practical result becomes impossible, as I think it now is, the war ought to cease; and it is the part of true statesmanship to discern in advance when that moment is coming.

If the inquiry be further pressed as to how I would arrange the terms of pacification and recognition, and adjust the difficulty of boundaries and river rights, my answer is, I would begin by a cessation of hostilities and armistice for a fixed period, not too short. It is the idlest of delusions to imagine that in the heat and smoke of actual conflict we can make our plans for the future, or even see what that future is likely to be. If arms were laid down for a time, there would be a repugnance to take them up again, which of itself would be favorable to satisfactory adjustment. This, I am quite aware, is but postponing the inevitable decision which sooner or later must be made; and I do not hesitate to say that, dodge and defer it as we may, in my opinion the decision—I mean as to limits, and possibly as to debt—must be made by the States and their citizens, acting as they did when seventy years ago they entered into the Federal compact. There is no other conceivable mode. Maryland and Kentucky, after all, each for herself will have to determine where her lot shall be cast, and what her pecuniary liability must be, whether for a share of the Federal or of the Confederate debt, or whether to be exempt from both. What Maryland and Kentucky do, Pennsylvania and Ohio have

a right to do. This settles the question of boundaries, and nothing else will; and if the decision involves the abandonment of Washington, and leaving it a monument of what was once the capital of a great Republic, be it so. I would rather see it a ruin than what it is now,—the garrison town of an uncertain frontier, a mere barrier fortress,—a huge encampment of half-tenanted houses, deserted by respectable inhabitants, and given up to the occupation of jobbers and contractors and disreputable men and women of all descriptions. These are sad realities, but they must be looked at. Our mistake all along has been a reluctance to look realities in the face.

If this were to be the action of the several States as to limits, and the two confederacies are, by the voluntary action of the States, ultimately established and defined, surely to them may be left the really international question as to the navigation of the Mississippi. The citizen of the Northwest would, it seems to me, be better content, and have greater security for unimpeded commerce than he has now, or can have for a long time to come, with New Orleans under stern martial law, held by one belligerent, and Vicksburg by another, and when no craft but a ram or an iron-clad gunboat dare venture from Cairo to Baton Rouge. One of the first legislative acts, yet in full force, of the Confederate government, was to declare the peaceful navigation of the Mississippi free to the citizens of any of the States on its border or the borders of any of its tributaries.*

There was once another hope of peaceful solution, which I record here merely to show how anxiously my mind has dwelt on this one subject of pacification. It rested, like all else, on the postulates of armistice and recognition. That a National Convention, or, more properly, Congress, should

* The legislation of the Confederate Congress, so far as we are permitted to know, presents some contrasts to ours. The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus was there suspended according to law, and in specified localities, which the President distinctly announces. The Southern Congress has never authorized the issue of five-cent notes with no promise to pay them, or made its currency a legal tender.

convene at Annapolis, or some other central point, under State authority, into which the States should come as independent powers—South Carolina and Pennsylvania, Virginia and New York—and deliberate on matters of common concern, deciding them by the processes which regulate the action of such bodies, subject to ratification. I once hoped that, could such a body be convoked, the pressure from without, to say nothing of the sentiment within, which, when the war is over, and not till then, will have free scope, would compel some sort of reconstruction, or new Federal relations. The necessity of a provision for the public debt, South as well as North, creates an influence that might be operative. This, I repeat, was once a hope; but it has been washed away in a torrent of blood. Still, a National Convention, or State Conventions with that view, ought to be the watchwords of the conservative North from this time forth.

Should, however, all appeals to reason and gentleness fail, and the iron determination be adhered to at any cost to carry on and perpetuate this desolating war, does it occur to any mind, as it has like a phantom to mine, what may be the consequence? The tides of war—the ebb and flow of victory and defeat—are very uncertain. There is a pause in the current just now; but who can tell at what moment it may burst upon us in aggressive hostilities, made unsparing by the example we have set? The horror and inevitable suffering of such a reverse I do not care to allude to. I never read the truculent rhetoric with which our Northern newspapers describe the devastation of Virginia without a thought of possible misery here at home. And has not the idea occurred to other minds that, in the course of events,—the character and tendency of which no one can venture to foretell, (for the sealed book of our revelations we are not worthy to open,) discontent,—the sense of weariness and perplexity,—the sinking of the heart at sounds, and sights, and news even, of distant woes, the restlessness of an agitated and saddened people, may find utterance, and portions of the Middle and all the Western States, if not now, by-and-by, wearied with sorrow, and shame, and bloodshed, and debt, weary of the recruiting sergeant and the tax-collector, of the am-

bulance of the wounded, and the hearse of the dead, may become reconciled to changes more momentous still?* The very Union sentiment which has been so sedulously cultivated—the idea of indissolubility—of *one* nation and *one* government that cannot be loosened or broken asunder—may suddenly take this form of expression; and the fanatics of the North, who, when the day of terror comes, will be glad enough to let the South go, may find a government and a Union they little dream of. As I write these words of sombre forecast, I am deeply impressed by what was recently said in Dublin by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, who is not only, in the current phrase of the day, a loyal man, but has been recently in the service of the Federal Government. “In this difficulty,” said Archbishop Hughes, “the country that was *one*, not more than three years ago, is now divided into two,—that is, on the battle-field,—but not two in civil order. It is one country still, and must and shall be one. No matter what may occur,—no matter what the foreign interference, whether military or naval, that may destroy the cities round the borders of that country,—no matter what may occur, the question must end as I have described, that people shall remain *one*; and if the party that is nominally called rebel,—the term I don’t use in respect to them at all,—if that party shall triumph, then I will transfer my allegiance to that party; not as a party, but as the legitimate

* In a report, made as late as September, 1862, by a New York committee, composed of Dr. Francis Lieber and others, I find this passage:—“The present corps of ambulance-drivers is largely composed of the most brutal and demoralized men in the army. When left to act on their own responsibility, many throw aside all humanity and decency, and treat the wounded with barbarous cruelty and neglect.

“The cruel neglect of wounded men, after the late battle of Manassas, only too truly illustrates what has occurred after every battle of this Rebellion, and what will inevitably recur at every future battle, unless a thorough change be instituted. Hundreds of wounded men were reported to the Surgeon-General as still remaining with their wounds undressed, lying on the bare ground, exposed to the sun, and cold, and storm, days after the conflict was over. The sufferings of those brave men can never be told, and never half realized. Many died from neglect, and many more will die because relief was so long in coming.”

government of the United States." These are not my words, nor words of the class of thinkers to which I am supposed to belong. They are the bold expression of the inner thought of an eminent man of high intelligence and extended forecast; and who shall say that there is not a wide sympathy throughout the North which some day may find fearful utterance? Then may come anarchy and internecine strife; then comes to us our share of those awful miseries which now afflict Kentucky and Tennessee and Missouri, where brother is literally armed against brother, and child against parent.

These are solemn, perhaps perilous, truths, and I write them with hesitation; but they have struck me deeply and painfully, and my task is to write the truth. They imply, I am quite aware, a distrust of the permanence and genuineness of the present excitement in the North, and a want of confidence in what is now known as Northern patriotism,—comprising in that word not merely transient enthusiasm, but the elements of official integrity and public virtue. I regret to say I have no such confidence; and the conviction which most depresses me, and makes me turn sadly away from any hope of remedy, is, that there will be no anchorage when the storm is over. Let any one look back on the legislative history of most of the Northern States for the last twenty years,—each year worse than the one that went before,—and, if he care for truth, he will admit what I have said. And if it be contended that this rich iniquity, running through every branch of Administration, is but the canker of a long peace, let him look to the record of war, its catalogue of rascality and peculation, its novel nomenclature of crime, its 'shoddy,' its gun and blanket and ship contracts, and say if it is any better in war than in peace. The Indiana bond forgery occurred in the very agony of the war, and was concealed, if not compounded, in order to protect Federal credit, and not to discourage subscriptions to the loans of the Government; and will any man, the veriest optimist who lives, tell me that in his conscience he looks with faith to the payment—even to the extent of its appalling interest—of the war debt, which we are rolling up so fast,—its thousands, or hundreds of

millions, funded and unfunded,—without counting the millions by-and-by for claims and damages and pensions, or the contingent cost of negro deportation and colonization? It is a grave subject, this of public credit, on which no one should talk lightly. Its abuse and its disparagement are alike, though not equally, mischievous. But the fear and the belief of every thoughtful man must at this moment be that, unless some limit to new debt be soon imposed, when pay-day comes there will be a race among the States of the North as to further disintegration, and an effort in this way to escape from the overpowering burthen of desperate indebtedness. If things go on as they are now doing, there will be no law by that time to guard contracts and pecuniary rights. Foreign capitalists see this; and, from violations of the Constitution in one direction, draw the natural inference that it will not avail as a security in another. The home victims of passionate credulity will awaken to this reality by-and-by, and those who have stabbed the Constitution, and their apologists, will have no right to complain if the lawlessness they have initiated returns to plague its inventors in the form of gigantic repudiation or bankruptcy.

* It was well said by Mr. Seymour, just before the New York election, that "The weight of annual taxation will severely test the loyalty of the people. Repudiation of our financial obligations would cause disorder and endless moral evils. But pecuniary rights will never be held more sacred than personal rights. Repudiation of the Constitution involves the repudiation of national debts, and of the guarantees of rights of property, of person, and of conscience. . . . If we begin a war upon the compromises of the Constitution, we must go through with it. It contains many restraints upon our natural rights. It may be asked by what right do the six small New England States, with a population less than that of New York, enjoy six times its power in the Senate, which has become the controlling branch of the Government? By what natural right do these six States, with their small population and their limited territories, balance the power of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan? The vast debt growing out of this war will give rise to new and angry discussions. It will be held almost exclusively in a few Atlantic States. Look upon the map of the Union, and see how small is the territory in which it will be owned. We are to be divided into debtor and creditor States, and the last will have a vast preponderance of power and strength. Unfortunately, there is no taxation upon this national debt, and its share is thrown off upon other property. It is

This sounds like despair. It is kindred to it; and it is what every thinking man feels. Even thus despondent, I am quite willing, within my limited sphere, to act, to bear my share of the burthen, however heavy, and scrupulously to obey the law. Hence it is that, even in this hour of gloom, I yet cling to the faith embodied in the Philadelphia resolutions of January, 1861,—that possibly the independent or concurrent action of the great Middle States, swayed by a sentiment of local fidelity,—especially the action of Pennsylvania,—may be invoked to save us, not from present disunion, for that cannot be averted, but from the anarchy which is at hand,—closer than we imagine,—or from some new form of consolidated government alien to our habits and education, which is sure to be conjured out of the seething cauldron of civil war.

In common with all considerate men, I look forward with deep solicitude to the elections which are to occur this autumn. Should the thirteen voting States exhibit a unanimous revolt from the policy of the Lincoln government, it may in some mode, inscrutable, I admit, to my perplexed vision, lead to a revival or restoration of the Union. It assuredly will, to a termination of this bloody war. No Administration can resist such a warning or stand against such an alienated constituency. But it is well to look to the alternative result: of a divided North,—divided, I mean, in opinion,—with New York and New England, or even isolated New England, voting one way, and the great Middle States another. Proud, then, may be the position, solemn the responsibility, of those who live in the belt of territory extending from the Northern line of Pennsylvania and the Lakes to the Potomac and Ohio,—from the Atlantic to the Mississippi,—citizens of the great central sovereignties, New Jersey (bravest and truest of them all) and Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, if, resisting

held where many of the Government contracts have been executed, and where, in some instances, gross frauds have been practised. It is held largely where the Constitution gives a disproportionate share of political power. With all these elements of discord, is it wise to assail constitutional laws or bring authority into contempt?"

the blandishments and the threats of Executive authority, they shall assert by their votes loyalty to the Constitution in its strictest sense and closest obligation, and their determination to arrest the raging course of fanaticism, and a resolution that the tide of aggressive war shall sweep over them no longer. The Middle States may save themselves, if they will.

W. B. REED.

CHESTNUT HILL, NEAR PHILADELPHIA, August 14, 1862.

The text of the preceding pages was written at the time it is dated. Three months have since rolled by, and we are no nearer a military result than we were then. One hundred thousand Northern men—or, on an average, since the 14th of August, more than a thousand a day, gathered in fearful heaps—have died, or been sent sick or wounded home. The funded national debt,—to say nothing of local indebtedness,—growing at the rate of sixty thousand dollars every waking and sleeping hour, reaches now to some uncertain line between six hundred and sixteen hundred millions. Pennsylvania's share of the Federal interest alone, counting the Confederate States back again in the Union, is more than half of the principal of her own debt at the beginning of the war. The precious metals still fly openly or stealthily away,—the paper currency having sunk twenty per cent. in the last two months; and yet, as it seems, we are no nearer to restoration by the processes of war, no nearer to conquest, to subjugation,—certainly not to reconciliation and peace. A bloody victory tomorrow will bring us no nearer. A winter campaign wastes energy, but chills no animosities.

One or two supplementary remarks the lapse of time enables, and the course of public events requires, me to make. They are in part gloomy and in part consolatory. The reader acquainted with my habits of thought may wonder why, in these pages of adverse criticism, I have not dwelt more on the infractions of personal rights and liberty which have occurred. It is not, I can truly say, from insensibility to their enormity, but rather because they have been so freely and boldly exposed

and discussed by others. There are two, however, affecting citizens of this Commonwealth, which I must, in passing, notice, though without elaborate comment or illustration. One is that of Mr. Winder, who for fourteen months has been imprisoned in a distant fortress on a simulated warrant of arrest,—which had it been genuine would have been illegal,—and who is still kept there, in flagrant defiance of adjudicated law.* The other is one which cries loudly for redress, and to which, as it seems to me, sufficient attention has not been paid. It is the more momentous because it involves the State authorities in grave responsibility. On the 6th August, 1862, James Wadsworth, of New York,—a Federal military officer and titular Governor of the District of Columbia,—came with a guard to the capital of Pennsylvania, and, without warrant or authority of law, seized at night, and carried away to prison out of the State, four well-known and respectable and, as the result showed, innocent citizens, and this, too, under the very eye of the Governor and his Cabinet. They were taken, imprisoned, and discharged, and, so far as the public is apprized, no one word of remonstrance or protest, or even intercession, has

* Mr. Winder and his fellow-prisoners were first immured at Fort Lafayette near New York, and thence removed to Fort Warren, on a remote island in Boston Harbor, where they now are. The historical reader may make the application of the following passage from Clarendon, referring to the imprisonment of the ‘sympathizers’ of 1640:—“Their friends in the city found a line of communication with them. Hereupon the wisdom of the State thought fit that these infectious sores should breathe out their corruption in some air more remote from that catching city, and less liable to the contagion: and so, by an order of the lords of the council, Mr. Prynne was sent to a castle in the island of Jersey; Dr. Bastwick to Scilly; and Mr. Burton to Guernsey; where they remained unconsidered and, truly I think, unpitied (for they were men of no merit), for the space of two years, till the beginning of the present parliament.” Then, adds the courtly historian, they were discharged and came to London, where they were received with enthusiasm, —“whilst the Ministers of State, like men in an ecstasy surprised and amazed with several apparitions, had no speech or motion, as if having committed such an excess of jurisdiction (as men upon surfeits are enjoined for a time to eat nothing) they had been prescribed to exercise no jurisdiction at all.”—*History of Rebellion*, Book III. p. 86.

been uttered in their behalf. Their wrong remains unredressed to this hour.

Proudly, even in this hour of gloom, may we turn from this picture of individual wrong to that of great Commonwealths rising, as did Pennsylvania and Ohio and Indiana a month ago, and by unbought and unterrified suffrage speaking out in behalf of the ancient Constitution. It makes one hope against hope. As I write, the results of the elections North and East are not definitively known, but, be they what they may, I reiterate the hope I have already endeavoured to make intelligible, that while a united North may yet save us from the gulf, on the perilous edge of which we stand, yet should, in the providence of God, the spirit of topical fanaticism which has brought all this misery upon us still maintain its sway, it may be the destiny of these great Middle States to speak, and, if need be, to act in self-defence, and in maintenance of all that is left of Constitutional liberty in the fragmentary and shattered Union which survives. They may act together, or they may act separately. Within each of them is the perfect machinery of government; and all that is wanted is an animating and practical spirit of local loyalty. It may be that one man can supply that spirit; and it is in the hope that these fugitive words of earnest suggestion rather than of counsel may find an answer in the heart of the people, that they are given to the public. "How often," wrote a great man, amidst the awful social convulsions of the last century,—"how often has public calamity been arrested on the very brink of ruin by the seasonable energy of a single man! Have we no such man among us? I am as sure as I am of my being that one vigorous mind, without office, without situation, without public functions of any kind (at the time when the want of such a thing is felt),—I say, one such man, confiding in the aid of God, and full of just reliance in his own fortitude, vigor, enterprise, and perseverance, would first draw to him some few like himself,—and then that multitudes, hardly thought to be in existence, would appear and troop about him."

A P P E N D I X.

IT was my intention to collate a number of specimens of free speech in other countries in times of war; but I shall content myself with the following very familiar ones:—

In 1781, Mr. Pitt, speaking of the war of that day against “Rebellion,” said, “The gentleman, in the warmth of his zeal, has called this a holy war. For my part, though I have more than once been reprehended severely for calling it a wicked or accursed war, I am persuaded, and I will affirm, that it is a most accursed, wicked, barbarous, cruel, unnatural, unjust, and diabolical war. The expense of it has been enormous, far beyond any former experience; and yet what has the nation received in return? Nothing but a series of ineffective victories, or severe defeats,—victories only celebrated with temporary triumph over our brethren whom we would trample down, or defeats which fill the land with mourning for the loss of dear and valuable relatives slain in the impious cause of enforcing unconditional submission. Where is the man who, on reading the narrative of those bloody and well-fought contests, can refrain from lamenting the loss of so much blood shed in such a cause, or from weeping, on whatever side victory might be declared?”

Earlier in the same civil war, in 1777, Burke wrote to the sheriffs of Bristol:—

“The poorest being that crawls on earth, contending to save himself from injustice and oppression, is an object respectable to God and men. But I cannot conceive any existence under heaven (which, in the depths of its wisdom, tolerates all sorts of things) that is more truly odious than an impotent, helpless creature, without civil wisdom or military skill, without a consciousness of any qualification for power, calling for battles

which he is not to fight, contending for a violent dominion he can never exercise, and satisfied to be himself miserable in order to render others wretched."

In 1795, during the war with France, Mr. Fox said, "Say at once that a free Constitution is no longer suitable to us; say at once, in a manly manner, that, upon an ample review of the state of the world, a free Constitution is not fit for you; conduct yourselves at once as the senators of Denmark; lay down your freedom, and acknowledge and accept of despotism. But do not mock the understandings and feelings of mankind by telling the world that you are free,—by telling me that if, for the purpose of expressing my sense of the public administration of this country, of the calamities which this war has occasioned, I state a grievance, or make any declaration of my sentiments in a manner that may be thought seditious, I am to be subjected to penalties hitherto unknown to the law. Did ever free people meet so? Did ever a free state exist so? Good God Almighty! is it possible the feelings of the people of this country should be thus insulted?"